



A SHORT
ESSAY
ON

The Nature of the Kingdom
of GOD within us.



A Collection of Tracts written by *John Asgill* Esq; from the Year 1700, to the Year 1715. Some relating to *Divinity*: And others to the History of the *Monarchy*, the Succession of the *Crown*, and Constitution of the *Government* of Great Britain. Price 5 s.

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Written by Mr. ASGILL.



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Written by Mr. ASHLEY.

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THE Acmen of the Ambition
of Man, is to be a King :
And of Woman, to be a
Queen.

And because this Sovereignty falls
to the share of so few of Mankind ;

Their Subjects under them have
framed Counterfeits of these Sove-
reigns, to entertain themselves with
the imaginary Fancies of them in
Fictions, Romances, and Interludes.

And that this Ambition of Man
may not be baulked or disappointed
by that Metamorphosis or Change of
State, through which Man is to pass,
by the Redemption and Salvation of
God in Christ, revealed in the Scrip-
tures ; that Metamorphosis is calcu-

lated to advance all the Subjects under it to the Title of Kings:

Ye are Kings and Priests unto God.

But that Man may not fall into wrong Conceptions of this Title,

Christ himself, the Author of this Metamorphosis, hath left us a short but full Definition of this Kingdom, and where it lies :

The Kingdom of God is within you.

In distinction to the *Kingdom of Man* without us :

But not with an Exclusion to it ;

For that one and the same Person may be invested with both these Kingdoms.

But whoever is so doubly invested, doth find and esteem *the Kingdom of God within him*, more eligible than *the Kingdom of Man without him*.

And if he should fall under a Necessity of parting with one of them, he will quit the last, to retain the former.

For

For every Man covets the most excellent things, or what he thinks to be so.

But as by the Fate of God, and the Policy of Man, the Kings of the Earth stand each by themselves in a small Number of Units, in comparison to the Multitude of Tens, Hundreds, Thousands, and Millions of their Subjects under them:

So in this Number of Units, that stands thus invested with the Kingdoms of Men without them, it doth not happen to all that small Number to have the Kingdom of God within them.

And therefore such of them who have it not, cannot distinguish which of those two Kingdoms are most eligible, having never experienced but one.

But how then shall a Subject of *this Kingdom of God within him*, who never had any Kingdom of Man without

without him, make this distinction between two, having never try'd but one?

To this Question, *Paul* (who was a Subject under this Circumstance of having the Kingdom of God within him, without any Kingdom of ~~Cæsar~~ without him) hath left this Answer:

1 Cor. 2. *He that is spiritual, judgeth all things; yet he himself is judged of no Man.*

Which sounds at first dogmatical and arbitrary.

For one Man to judge all,
And he himself be judg'd by none;
This would be an Excess of Power
in the Kingdoms of Men.

Had he said, *The spiritual Man judgeth spiritual things, and the temporal Man temporal things;*

This had been a *Reddendo singula singulis*; Rendring unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.

But

But here it is, and so it must stand.
There is no striking out any Words
of the Bible, without incurring a Pe-
nalty, which no Man would wish to
fall under. Rev. 22. 19.

And upon a Re-inspection of it,
this Judgment of the Spiritual Man
will appear to be just and true, and
no Ineroachment upon the Temporal
Judicature.

Because this Judgment affects none
but himself, without extending to
judge or condemn any others : *I judge
no Man.*

But then as this Spiritual Man pas-
seth no Judgment upon others,

So he will not admit them to judge
for him in Matters of Salvation : *He
himself is judged of no Man.*

Let Pontifices and Prelates, Fathers,
Councils, and Synods, make what
Creeds they will, the Spiritual Man
will not admit them into his Faith;
from that Temporal Authority only,
B. without

without first comparing them with the Word of Truth, taken up again, and shewn unto him by the Spirit of God, promised to and entailed upon every Believer unto the End of the World.

He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.

And lo ! I am with you even unto the End of the World.

And for so doing, the Spiritual Man hath good Warrant, from an early Precedent of the *Berean* Auditors; who were call'd *Noble*, for not hastily falling in with the first Preaching of the Apostles themselves, till they had searched the former Scriptures, to see whether those things were so :

Comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual, by the Assistance of the Spirit of God mingled with the Spirit of Man; The Spirit of God witnessing with our Spirits.

And this is that Kingdom of God within us, which they that have it do find,

find, feel, and know to be more eligible than any Kingdom of Man without them; altho they never had any actual Experience of the Possession of any such Temporal Kingdom.

And tho they do not despise Dignities,

Yet they can judge for themselves, that they would not exchange this Kingdom of God within them, for any Kingdom of Man without them.

So that tho they have no Kingdom of or in this World *in specie*,

Yet they have the Value of it in something else, (or more:)

The Kingdom of God being (without offence) greater than the Kingdom of Man.

Who then would not be *this Spiritual Man*, with *this Kingdom of God within him*?

But the Nature of this Kingdom of God is such, that till we have it, we neither know it or desire it:

Being that *white Stone with a new Name, which none can read, but they that have it.*

And they that have it, delight to read in nothing else.

This Kingdom of God within us being the nearest and most intimate Approach and Communication of God to Man, or that Man is capable of receiving from him; *whose Face no Man can see and live.*

And is more eligible and useful for Man than the personal Presence of Christ himself upon Earth, *ipso Judice.*

Nevertheless I tell you the Truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

(Which, by the way, renders the Trade of Pilgrimage to be useless and vain.)

And the Reception of this Spirit of God in Man, is the Earnest of his Salvation by Christ; who, as the Fore-runner,

runner, is for us already entred into Heaven, and there stands seized and possessed in Trust for all Believers under him.

The Study and Knowledge whereof is the highest Enjoyment in this World.

Title and Possession join'd, is the Pleasure of Man.

But Possession without Right is rather Envy and Torment, than Pleasure.

Friend, how camest thou in hither? is a dreadful Question to him that can't answer it.

And Ye shall see them come from the East and from the West, and from the North and from the South, and sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the Kingdom of God, and you your selves shut out: is a fearful Sight, and a dismal Doom.

But they that have secured their parts in the first Resurrection, by which they are sure to be of the number

ber of those Elect, that shall be thus gather'd together from the four Winds of the Earth; they are not eager or impatient for the Possession of Heaven, as knowing that Title will draw the Possession in due time.

And during this Interval they employ their Talents in making this Title surer and surer still. The greater Value the Possession is, the more jealous we are of our Title to it.

And this Increase of Knowledge is still an Increase of Pleasure :

And is that Peace of God which passeth all Understanding.

Not as being contrary to, or differing from Man's Understanding;

But that it doth advance the Mind or Soul of Man as far as Man's Understanding can go.

And after that, launcheth it out into a farther View of things unutterable, and past all Understanding.

Withal dictating to Man still to follow on : *Forgetting the things that are behind,*

*behind, and reaching forth to the things
that are before, I press forwards.*

For as a Man in a Journey hath his
Prospect always terminated by the
Hill next before him; and can't see
beyond that, till he hath ascended up
to it, and then he spies another:

So in our Travel towards the new
Jerusalem, our Journeying in it is,

From Hill to Hill,

From Thought to Thought,

From Strength to Strength,

From Faith to Faith,

Till we appear before God in *Sion*.

Faith is the Vent, or Effusion, or
Produce of Knowledge.

And as fast as that Produce is made,
the Understanding goes to work a-
gain to collect more Knowledge, in
order to produce more Faith.

God in the Formation of Man's
Person, hath hung his Arms below
his Head.

But hath so jointed them, that Man
can extend them every way beyond
him-

himself, both higher and broader.

And thus in the first Paradise, tho the Fruit of the Tree of Life was above Man's Stature, yet it was within the reach of his Hand:

Now lest he put forth his Hand, and take also of the Tree of Life.

In resemblance to this:

Tho the Science of Eternal Life be a Theme above the Current of Man's first Thoughts;

Yet it is within the Reach of his Mind or Soul lifted up by the Spirit of God within him.

And as by the Mechanism of Man's Body, tho he can move it no further at once than the Triangle of his Limbs will admit him;

Yet by multiplying that Motion, he can convey it (on a level) to any Space; or, by the Degrees of a Ladder, can advance it to any Height.

So tho the Mind or Soul of Man can take in but one Thought at once:

—Tem—

————— *Tempore eodem*
Pectora nostra duas non admittentia Curas.

Yet by Multiplication and Succession of Thoughts, Man is capable of Knowledge even *ad infinitum*.

The Water that I shall give him, shall be a Spring of living Water, rising up to everlasting Life.

And without this Water of Life, which is the invisible Kingdom of God within us ; all our outward and visible Shews of Things are but as so many painted Images and counterfeit Appearances, without Life.

Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.

The natural Life of Man is as a Mechanism ;

Which can move no longer than the Force or Power that maintains it, continues.

And tho some of the Strings in that Motion are longer than others, yet they all wind down at last, and then

the Motion stops and stagnates.

Before the Flood, God lengthen'd
the Thred of Man's Days to six, se-
ven, eight, and some nine Hundred
Years and more.

But they all ended in this, *And he died.*

But now this Spring of Life from
God in Christ is a perpetual Motion,
flowing from the Fountain of Life it self.

*Labitur & labetur in omne volubilis
Ævum.*

No Stream is capable of a higher
Ascent than its own original Fountain,
from whence it first flows.

But let the Fountain from whence
the Stream runs be ever so high,

And the Descent or Declivity thro
which the Stream is to pass, be ever
so low ;

The Force of that Descent will
maintain the Current of it up to the
first Ascent again :

As may be seen in the familiar In-
stance of a Horn bent in the fashion
of a Half-Moon, through which the
Water

Water will run as fluidly from one end to the other, as if the Horn were streight.

The Earthly Part of Man being first formed out of the Dust of the Ground;

Tho God did afterwards infuse into that Lump the *Breath of Life*, whereby Man became a *living Soul*:

Yet that Earthly Part first formed, hath ever since kept the Ascendant of the Infusion.

From whence the whole Man is called *Earthy*:

The first Man was of the Earth, Earthy.

But the Godhead of Christ assuming the Humanity to it self, always kept the Ascendant of that Humanity, without admitting it to be depressed to earthly Things.

The second Man is the Lord from Heaven.

And this Godhead (being the Fountain of Life) thus descending into the Humanity, hath virtually attracted the whole Human Nature with it, and lifted it up with himself, to his own original Fountain of Life.

*If I be lifted up from the Earth, I will
draw all Men unto me :*

All that will come unto me for it.

*But ye will not come unto me, that ye
may have Life.*

*And the Way and Manner of this
Attraction, and of the advanced State
of Man in Christ, is the Science of
eternal Life.*

*The Attainment whereof in this
World translates our Earth into Hea-
ven, and makes this Globe of Ground,*

————— Insueti Limen Olympi.

*The King makes the Court,
And the Presence of God makes
Heaven.*

*So said Jacob, Surely the Lord is in this
place : This is none other but the House
of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.*

*And so God himself said to Moses
at the Bush, Put off thy Shoes from off
thy Feet, for the Place whereon thou stan-
dest is Holy Ground.*

*It is the Saying of a Great Divine,
That the Knowledge of things is the Trans-
plantation*

plantation of the same things within our selves.

And a greater than he said, *Be ye transformed in the Image of your Minds.*

For the Mind or Soul of Man is capable of Transformation, without Change of his Body.

And so far as the Mind or Soul is thus transformed in this World, Man is so far in his Journey towards the *New Jerusalem*; and is so far entred into the other World.

And thus the Mind or Soul of Man enters Heaven during the Life of the Body: *Truly our Conversation is in Heaven.*

And thus Man is a Companion to himself.

Christ said of himself, *I am not alone, for the Father is with me.* And hath warranted Man to say, *I am not alone while the Spirit of God is with me.*

And I say *while*, because the Wind don't always blow in this Corner.

The Spirit of God is a free Agent.

As the Wind bloweth when and where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof,
but

but knowest not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And when this Wind is gone, we become like Sampson (after breach of his Nazarite Vow) *weak as other Men.*

And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

And not only weak, but wicked too.

When the Spirit of God was departed from Saul, an evil Spirit entred into him.

Man is like a Glass, that varies its Colours according to the Liquors put into it.

But tho a Believer can't retain the Spirit, yet he is insured that God will not totally take it from him; being the Issue of Life from Christ the original Gift of God.

Having therefore given us Christ, how shall he not with him give us all things?

This first Gift was the hardest for God to part with.

But that being granted, all the Residue of Man's Salvation flows from
thence

thence in a Declivity or Descent: and
facilis Descensus.

But now he that is destitute of this inward Companion and Remembrancer, this Spirit of Life and Kingdom of God within him, carrieth but a barren Soul about him, and leadeth but a solitary Life amongst all his other Company.

There is a Laughter without Mirth, and a Sadness of Countenance that maketh the Heart glad.

Therefore the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who best knew the Complexion of Human Nature, and the Political Constitution and Regimen of the World, hath left us his Prescriptions and Commandments to secure all things at home first; and upbraideth the Folly of Man for inverting that Method, by beginning his Business at the wrong end.

Out of the Heart proceed the Issues of Life and Death.

Therefore the Cleansing must begin there.

Else

Else all the Washing and Wiping the Outside of the *Cup* or *Platter*, is but Slovenliness and Slattery, Hypocrisy and Iniquity.

And whereas the *Pharisees* in their Fasts, by disfiguring their Faces, gave out false Copys of their Hearts; he prescribed to his Disciples a Disguise in Reverse.

But when thou fastest, anoint thy Head and wash thy Face :

That the true Fast may be all within.

And hath forbidden us to make any outward Shew of our Reconciliation even with God himself, till we have first reconciled our selves to Man within. *Matth. 5.*

And tho we are to extend our Peace and Charity as far as we can, yet they are most properly begun at home.

Do good unto all Men, but more especially to the Household of Faith.

And without this Care within, and Care at home, Man is but *Alieni Appetens*, and *Sui Profusus* : courting the Friendship of Strangers, and hating his own Soul.

Peace without, and War within ;

Peace abroad, and War at home ;

Is like Fire pent up in a Rock, which may break Goal, and tear its Prison to pieces one time or other.

But now I think on't, I must go no further,
Lest I seem to have *begun with the Spirit,*
and ended with the Flesh.

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